

BEAUTY

The big SLEEP

What does your skin really need at night? We ask the experts how to get the very best beauty sleep ...

A good night's sleep is essential for a hard day's work ... but also for skin that looks its best. We've all read the figures - how seven hours sleep a night can lead to better health and a healthier heart. Naturally, it affects your skin too. A recent Mintel survey found that 62 per cent of female skincare users aged 55-plus believe sleep has the biggest impact on their skin. And we are certainly using more night cream: in the last twelve months, night creams usage has risen from 39 to 48 per cent. There are endless bottles of fragrant oils and sleep creams stacked up on our bedside tables. But it's still hard to know for sure what our skin actually needs at night - if anything. Oil or no oil? Serum or sleep mask? Is there a guaranteed way to wake up with better skin?

Night is a time of renewal and repair for your skin: regeneration is at its peak at this time, when it is able to absorb skincare better than during the day. So you're looking to support this, rather than do anything too complicated or distracting. First things first: "It's especially important to remove pollution leftovers properly each evening - don't even think about going to bed without cleansing your skin," says dermatologist Dr Stefanie Williams. Try something simply moisturising like Neutrogena Water Gel Cleanser with hyaluronic acid. Dr Katherine Mulrooney agrees: "The most important part of a nightly routine for skin is proper cleansing, ie double cleanse. The first cleanse is to take make-up off and the second is to clean skin. Use a soft muslin cloth which will also act as a gentle exfoliator."

FIRST STEPS

All ages can benefit from night treatments, say the experts. "The important thing about overnight skincare is that it should be targeted to your specific skin concerns," says dermo-pharmacist Dr Colette Haydon. But don't go overboard: "Younger people tend to overuse skincare - especially skincare containing harsh, active ingredients leading to dry, irritated skin," warns Dr Mulrooney. "Use skincare that is soothing and repairs the skin barrier for less irritated and smoother skin" [try Seavite skincare, from www.nourish.ie]. For oily, younger skin she recommends a moisturiser containing glycolic acid to improve skin texture and tone, such as Neostrata Bionic Cream; "For older skin, night is an excellent time to introduce retinoids and vitamin A derivatives that increase cell turnover."

STRIKING OIL

If you love a rich facial oil at night, choose carefully. "Face oils can be beneficial for dehydrated skin," says Dr Haydon. "Oil is not the same as water so even oily skin can be dehydrated and benefit from facial oils." But be aware of the quality of the oil you're using. Not all oils are equal. "Avoid facial oils that are silicone-based; these may feel nice on the



CAMERA PRESS/BAUER MEDIA/PAUL SUESSE

JUST ONE THING ... RETINOL

"Retinol can be used to give volume and firmness to the skin and reduce wrinkle depth, but it can also be used to control problem skin," notes Dr Haydon; her Lixirskin Night Switch Retinol 1% refines texture, improves sun damage and boosts protein. "Retinoids are miracle workers for mature skin," says Dr Mulrooney. "They increase skin cell turnover, improve luminosity, stimulate collagen and elastin and also decrease pigment which is more apparent in mature skins." She urges caution when starting off, building up your tolerance gradually to avoid irritation; just once a week for the first month. Jennifer Rock also suggests a gradual approach: "Retinyl palmitate is a progressive product, which means it should be introduced slowly and surely, rather than firing a more active form on the skin - it's like starting with small weights at the gym before adding more as you go ... Its stability and bioavailability means that it is less likely to cause a vitamin A-related skin irritation."

Her favourite progressive vitamin A product is Environ AVST. *The Skin Nerd: Your straight-talking guide to feeding, protecting & respecting your skin* by Jennifer Rock (Hachette Ireland), €17.99.



skin but are not as good quality." I tend to use an oil at night, sparingly, as I love the scent and feel of it: current favourites are by Irish brand Nunaia, Votary and Alex Carro. I alternate this with naturally exfoliating Elixseri Opening Act, which genuinely seems to "resurface" skin overnight and help its texture and brightness.

Another bedside stalwart is Estée Lauder's Advanced Night Repair: nine bottles of this gel/serum sell every minute and it can even be added to foundation, or used under a face mask; I love that it is oil- and fragrance-free.

UNDER THE EYES

Finally, what to do if you've had a sleepless night? We've tried hundreds of eye creams and know that a few things really work when it comes to dark circles. Vichy's Micro Hyalu Patches, designed to wear overnight, deliver a pure targeted shot of hyaluronic acid: press on like a plaster to activate the tiny cones of pure hyaluronic acid, mimicking the effects of microneedling. Other than that, it's concealer all the way (try Bobbi Brown's Creamy Corrector and then Concealer for best results). ■

SLEEP RETREAT

Need help sleeping? New Irish company Escapada specialises in Sleep Retreats, held in restful locations from Kerry to Mallorca, with ayurvedic food, Chinese medicine, yoga and meditation. The only thing that might keep you awake? Your bank balance. From €740 for a long weekend, a good night's sleep is a good investment ... www.escapadaretreat.com

BEDTIME ROUTINE

READ *Why We Sleep* by neuroscientist Matthew Walker (Allen Lane). Could keep you awake with its revelations on what poor sleep is doing to you. **DRINK** Amphis Cosmetic Cleansing Tisane. Organic herbal green tea (below) with its sea algae complex, rich in skin-boosting antioxidants and naturally detoxifying herbs. €19.99. **TRACK** Garmin Vivomart4 (below) offers advanced monitoring to track different stages of sleep; keep tabs on your sleep stats using a connected app. €139.99.



Good Sleep Solutions



1. Slip silk eye mask, €45stg, www.cultbeauty.co.uk. 2. Elizabeth Arden Retinol Ceramide Capsules Line Erasing Night Serum, €50. 3. Formula Absolute Ultimate Sleep Cream, €30, Marks & Spencer. 4. Opening Act serum, €76stg, www.elixseri.com. 5. Vivomart 4 activity and sleep quality tracker, €139.99, www.Garmin.com. 6. Vichy Micro Hyalu Patches, €20. 7. Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair, €67.